

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7849

INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 BRASILIA 8007

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SUBJECT: REACTIONS TO FORMER AMBASSADOR GORDON'S PRESS CONFERENCE
AND SUBSEQUENT STATMENTS

REF: SAO PAULO 2118

SUMMARY: REMARKS OF FORMER AMBASSADOR LINCOLN GORDON CONCERNING
COURSE OF BRAZILIAN REVOLUTION HAVE DRAWN GENERALLY NEGATIVE
PRESS PLAY, ECHOING CRITICAL COMMENTS OF CONGRESSMEN.
BOTH PRESS REPORTING AND CONGRESSIONAL COMMENT HAVE CCORDED
GORDON A KEY ROLE AS INTERESTED OBSERVER OR EVEN ACTIVE PARTICI-
PANT IN 1964 REVOLUTION. AT LEAST ONE DEPUTY HAS SUGGESTED THAT
LIBERAL CONCERNS NOW VOICED BY GORDON ARE A SMOKESCREEN FOR
MULTINATIONAL ECONOMIC, PRESSURES. FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCES,
ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE REPORTED TO SENSE POSSIBLE LINK BETWEEN
GORDON'S COMMENT AND JIMMY CARTER'S CRITICISM OF MILITARY
REGIMES. SUBSEQUENT STATEMENTS BY GORDON, WIDELY BUT NOT SO
SPECTACULARLY REPORTED, HAVE STRESSED ANALYTICAL RATHER THAN
JUDGMENTAL INTENT OF HIS COMMENTS, AND HAVE INCLUDED
HIS DENIAL OF ANY STALKING HORSE ROLE ON BEHALF OF A
FUTURE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. END SUMMARY

1. PRESS GAVE WIDE AND PROMINENT PLAY SEPT. 11 TO

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GENERALLY UNFAVORABLE REACTION AMONG BRAZILIAN CONGRESS-

MEN TO PRESS CONFERENCE REMARKS SEPT. 9 OF FORMER U.S.
AMBASSADOR LINCOLN GORDON. (REFTEL)

2. MAJOR PAPERS CARRIED COMMENTS OF ARENA AND MDB MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ON GORDON'S CLAIM THAT REVOLUTION HAD GONE AWRY. ALL OF THE SEVERAL CONGRESSMEN WHO WERE CITED IN INTERVIEWS WERE CRITICAL OF WHAT THEY TERMED OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE IN BRAZILIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. COMMENTARY ON SUBSTANCE OF GORDON'S COMMENTS, HOWEVER, TENDED TO DIVIDE ALONG PARTY LINES. ARENA CONGRESSMEN SAW GORDON AS REMOVED FROM AND MISINFORMED ABOUT CURRENT BRAZILIAN REALITIES, AND DEFENDED GEISEL REGIME AS HAVING INDEED ESTABLISHED THE BASIS FOR RE-DEMOCRATIZATION AT A PACE SUITED TO THE COUNTRY'S STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT. MDB COMMENT WAS TYPIFIED BY REMARKS OF DEPUTY LAERTE VIEIRA, MINORITY LEADER IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, WHO DECLARED THAT GORDON HAD MERELY RESTATED WHAT EVERYONE ALREADY KNEW AND WHAT THE MDB HAS BEEN REPEATING.

3. A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT THEME, PLAYED UP BY BRASILIA NEWS-PAPERS (JORNAL DE BRASILIA AND CORREIO BRAZILIENSE), WAS SOUNDED BY THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, ALENCAR FURTADO, WHO HEADED A CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION OF MULTINATIONALS LAST YEAR. FURTADO CLAIMED THAT GORDON MAY WELL BE EXPLOITING LIBERAL CONCERNS AND CONCEPTS AT THIS TIME AS A SMOKESCREEN FOR PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT IN FAVOR OF MULTINATIONALS AND AGAINST STATE ENTERPRISES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT DEBATE ON "ESTATIZACAO". (STATE CONTROL OF THE ECONOMY).

4. UNDERLYING THEME IN MUCH OF COMMENTARY WAS ALLEGED ROLE OF GORDON IN OVERTHROW OF GOULART GOVERNMENT IN 1964. PRESS CLAIMED TO SEE SIGNIFICANCE IN FACT THAT SAO PAULO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESIDENT PAUL MALUF INTRODUCED GORDON AS IMPORTANT FIGURE IN 1964 REVOLUTION AND GORDON DID NOT DISCLAIM HONOR. TYPICAL WAS JORNAL DE BRASILIA POLITICAL CARTOON NOTING GORDON'S CLAIM THAT "REVOLUTION HAD FAILED" AND ADDING WORRIEDLY... "SO HE'S COME TO MAKE ANOTHER ONE."

5. O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO ON SEPT. 11 CARRIED ARTICLE CITING
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PRINCIPAL REACTION AMONG FOREIGN MINISTRY OBSERVERS AS CURIOSITY ABOUT WHAT ROLE GORDON WOULD PLAY IF JIMMY CARTER IS ELECTED PRESIDENT. ESTADO QUOTED ITAMARATY "SOURCES" AS BELIEVING GORDON'S PRESENCE HERE WORTH PONDERING AND SPECULATING THAT HIS MEETINGS WITH CURRENT U.S. AMBASSADOR IN BRASILIA MIGHT PRESSAGE HIS OWN RETURN HERE IN SOME OFFICIAL CAPACITY. IF SO, HIS COMMENTS, WOULD HAVE TO BE SEEN IN CONJUNCTION WITH CARTER'S OWN EARLIER CRITICISMS OF MILITARY REGIMES ABROAD.

PAPER GOES ON TO QUOTE UNNAMED ITAMARATY DIPLOMAT AS STATING THAT WERE BRAZIL INDEED TO COME UNDER PRESSURE TO MODIFY ITS INTERNAL POLICIES, SUCH PRESSURE COULD BE SUCCESSFULLY RESISTED, IN PART THANKS TO THE GREATER STRENGTH AND DIVERSITY OF BRAZIL'S FOREIGN POLICY POSITIONS TODAY AS CONTRASTED WITH 1964.

6. PRINCIPAL EDITORIAL COMMENT TO DATE IS COLUMN BY CARLOS CASTELLO BRANCO IN SEPT. 13 EDITION OF JORNAL DO BRASIL. CASTELLO BRANCO STATES THAT NATIONS ACT BOTH IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR INTERESTS AND IN RESPONSE TO INTERNAL POLITICAL PRESSURES, AND IMPLIES THAT IT IS ONLY REALISTIC TO EXPECT THAT THEY MAY SEEK TO INFLUENCE INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS OF OTHER COUNTRIES IN RESPONSE TO SUCH INTERESTS AND PRESSURES, AS DID THE U.S. PRIOR TO THE REVOLUTION IN BRAZIL. COLUMNIST MENTIONS THE UNFAVORABLE EVOLUTION OF U.S. AND EUROPEAN OPINION TOWARDS BRAZIL WITH THE PASSAGE OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ACTS, AND OBSERVES THAT GORDON'S DISAPPOINTMENT IS IDENTICAL TO THAT OF THE LIBERAL WHO TOOK PART IN THE REVOLUTION, SINCE NEITHER AT PRESENT NOR FOR THE BETTER PART OF THE PERIOD SINCE 1964 HAVE THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND GUARANTEES OF CITIZENS BEEN IN EFFECT. ACCORDING TO CASTELLO, DISILLUSIONMENT OF U.S. GOVERNMENT WITH COURSE OF REVOLUTION HAD ALREADY BEEN LEFT CLEAR BY AMBASSADOR TUTHILL AT THE TIME AI-5 WAS PROMULGATED IN 1968, BUT THE OPINIONS OF GORDON AT THIS POINT ARE NOT LIKELY TO INFLUENCE OR DESTABILIZE THE REGIME UNDER WHICH BRAZILIANS CURRENTLY LIVE, LIKE IT OR NOT.

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INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

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7. STRAIGHT BUT MORE SUBDUED COVERAGE WAS ACCORDED SPEECH DELIVERED BY GORDON SEPT. 10 TO SAO PAULO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. IN HIS REMARKS, GORDON INDICATED APPROVAL OF BRAZILIAN POLICY OF DIVERSIFYING INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL RELATIONS, WHILE CAUTIONING BRAZIL AGAINST USE OF PROTECTIONIST POLICY BEYOND LIMITED PERIOD DICTATED BY SERIOUS FOREIGN EXCHANGE PROBLEMS. GORDON STATED HIS OPPOSITION TO PROLONGED RATES OF GROWTH IN EXCESS OF 10 PERCENT PER ANNUM, AND RECOMMENDED A 7-8 PERCENT GROWTH RATE AS HEALTHY FOR BRAZIL UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES.

8. IN REMARKS TO PRESS IN BRASILIA ON SEPT. 11, WHICH FOLLOWING DAY WERE GIVEN BROAD BUT LESS SPECTACULAR COVERAGE THAN HIS SEPT. 9 STATEMENTS, GORDON INDICATED THAT HIS COMMENTS CONCERNING THE BRAZILIAN POLITICAL SCENE HAD BEEN DISTORTED BY THE PRESS AND SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS CRITICISM OF ROAD FOLLOWED BY THE REVOLUTION, BUT SIMPLY AS STATEMENTS OF HISTORICAL FACT CONCERNING HIS OWN EXPECTATIONS PRIOR TO THE REVOLUTION AS CONTRASTED WITH THE COURSE EVENTS ACTUALLY TOOK. HOWEVER, WHEN ASKED HIS REACTION TO PRESIDENT GEISEL'S RECENT STATEMENT THAT IT IS FALSE TO SPEAK OF "RE-DEMOCRATIZATION" IN BRAZIL BECAUSE TRUE DEMOCRACY NEVER EXISTED HERE, GORDON INDICATED THAT WHILE NO DEMOCRACY IS EVER PERFECT AND COUNTRIES MAY EXHIBIT VARYING DEGREES OF DEMOCRATIC UNCLASSIFIED

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PRACTICE, BRAZIL COULD CERTAINLY BE CONSIDERED A DEMOCRACY DURING THE PERIOD 1946-1964. FINALLY, GORDON DENIED ANY LINKS BETWEEN HIMSELF AND JIMMY CARTER OR ANY PLANS ON HIS PART ASSUME A POSITION IN A CARTER ADMINISTRATION, AND QUALIFIED AS "ABSURD AND FANTASTIC SPECULATION" THE HYPOTHESIS THAT HE CAME TO BRAZIL TO BRING A MESSAGE FROM CARTER AS A MEANS OF PRESSURING THE COUNTRY TOWARDS A FASTER PACE OF "RE-DEMOCRATIZATION". JORNAL DE BRASILIA IN ARTICLE ON SEPT. 14 CITES COMMENTS OF U.S. AMBASSADOR CRIMMINS THAT GORDON'S OPINIONS ARE THOSE OF A PRIVATE CITIZEN SPEAKING ON HIS OWN BEHALF, NOT FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, AND INDICATES THAT CRIMMINS' AFFIRMATIONS SERVE TO FURTHER DIMINISH THE IMPORT OF GORDON'S STATEMENTS.

9. LATEST COMMENT COMES FROM SAO PAULO GOVERNOR PAULO EGIDIO MARTINS, WHO IS QUOTED IN LEAD HEADLINE STORY OF SEPT. 14 EDITION OF JORNAL DO BRASIL, AS WELL AS IN ARTICLES IN O ESTADO AND O GLOBE. EGIDIO STRESSES THAT THE REVOLUTION WAS EXCLUSIVELY A BRAZILIAN AFFAIR, WITHOUT U.S. INVOLVEMENT, AND COMMENTS THAT GORDON'S STATEMENTS FURTHER CONFIRM THAT THE U.S. VISION AT THE TIME WAS SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT FROM THAT

OF THE REVOLUTIONARY CONSPIRATORS. EGIDIO CLAIMS THAT THE UNITED STATES IN 1963 WAS UNCONCERNED BY THE EVENTUAL COMMUNIZATION OF BRAZIL, AND REFERS TO HIS ENCOUNTER AT THE TIME WITH A GROUP OF INTELLECTUALS AT HARVARD, WHO WENT SO FAR AS TO SUGGEST THAT IT WOULD BE LESS PROFITABLE FOR THE U.S TO EXERT ITSELF AGAINST A COMMUNIST TAKEOVER IN BRAZIL THAN TO PERMIT A COMMUNIST REVOLUTION WHICH WOULD LIKELY TIE DOWN MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF SOVIET MATERIAL ASSISTANCE IN A MANNER SIMILAR TO CUBA. MARTINS SAYS HE CAME BACK CONVINCED THAT THE REVOLUTIONARIES COULD COUNT ONLY UPON THEMSELVES, AND COMMENTS THAT THE REVOLUTION OR ANY OTHER ATTITUDE THAT BRAZIL MAY ADOPT MUST BE BASED ON ITS OWN BEST INTERESTS. CRIMMINS

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